(c) The Government has taken a number of steps to improve collection of revenue. Some of these are—

spreading knowledge about TDS & TCS provisions by organizing training programme for Govt. Departments and PSUs; Monitoring of the recovery of arrears by a Task Force; Monitoring of advance tax payments by top taxpayers; Detection of new areas of violation/ avoidance of the provisions of TDS and taking action for proper deduction and deposit of TDS; Computerization of the departmental business processes and databases for linking of information and reporting of high value tranactions; Collection of data of purchase of luxury goods. and issuance of notices in suitable cases; Multi-media campaign to encourage voluntary compliance of tax laws; Strengthening of tax administration by providing extra manpower and adequate infrastructure; Strengthening of audit capacity; Automation of business process, so that revenue risk is identified expeditiously and addressed in a scientific manner. Taxpayer education; Dissemination of information relating to various laws and levies; regular monitoring of commodity-wise/service-wise revenue; faster completion of pending investigations for issue of show cause notices, strengthening tax administration in key areas such as Service Tax, Internal Audit, Ports, etc.; Inclusion of deterred provisions in central excise laws; monitoring of export obligations under the export promotion schemes, etc.

(d) The following steps have been taken for widening of tax base:

1. Quoting of Permanent Account Number (PAN) in certain transactions.
2. Collection of information through Annual Information Return (AIR) and its utilization.
3. A Tax Information Network (TIN) has been formed as a repository of important tax related information which can be accessed by Department to widen the tax base.
4. From Assessment Year 2006-07, all partnership firms are compulsorily required to file return of income and the basis of filing of return has been shifted from "total income" to "gross total income".
5. Withdrawal of exemption u/s 10 (23EA) of the Income Tax Act.
6. Partial withdrawal of exemption u/s 10 (23G) of income from investment in infrastructure and other projects.
7. Persuasion and creation of awareness through education of tax payers.

Rise in Wholesale Price Index

†37. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rate of Wholesale Price Index has reached upto 4.11 per cent at the end of the week ending the 26th January, 2008 in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Reserve Bank of India has expressed its concern over this high rate of Wholesale Price Index; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the reasons for the Reserve Bank of India's deep concern?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The inflation measured in terms of WPI for all commodities reached 4.11 per cent on January 26, 2008. Weekly annual inflation rate from 1st week of April 2007 is indicated in the Table 1.

Table-1. Weekly annual inflation (per cent)

Week end	Inflation	Week end	Inflation	Week end	Inflation	Week end	Inflation
07-Apr.-07	6.44	07-Jul-07	4.61	06-Oct-07	3.22	05-Jan-08	3.79
14-Apr.-07	6.34	14-Jul-07	4.76	13-Oct-07	3.07	12-Jan-08	3.83
21-Apr.-07	6.07	21-Jul-07	4.65	20-Oct-07	3.11	19-Jan-08	3.93
28-Apr.-07	6.01	28-Jul-07	4.70	27-Oct-07	3.11	26-Jan-08	4.11
05-May-07	5.74	04-Aug-07	4.39	03-Nov-07	3.35	02-Feb-08	4.07
12-May-07	5.62	11-Aug-07	4.24	10-Nov-07	3.20	09-Feb-08	4.35
19-May-07	5.30	18-Aug-07	3.99	17-Nov-07	3.35	16-Feb-08	
26-May-07	5.15	25-Aug-07	3.94	24-Nov-06	3.11	23-Feb-08	
02-Jun-07	5-09	01-Sep-07	3.72	01-Dec-07	3.89	01-Mar-08	
09-Jun-07	4.28	08-Sep-07	3.46	08-Dec-07	3.84	08-Mar-08	
16-Jun-07	4.13	15-Sep-07	3.51	15-Dec-07	3.84	15-Mar-08	
23-Jun-07	4.32	22-Sep-07	3.51	22-Dec-07	3.50	22-Mar-08	
30-Jun-07	4.42	29-Sep-07	3.36	29-Dec-07	3.50	29-Mar-08	

(c) and (d) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the Third Quarter Review of the Annual Policy Statement of 2007-08 has mentioned that increase in international prices of oil, foodgrains and other commodities are visibly reflecting the strains imposed by aggregate demand conditions.

Opening of branches by banks

†38. SHRI DATTA MEGHE:
SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that private sector banks are opening their branches rapidly as compared to that of the public sector banks;

(b) if so, number of new branches opened by the public sector banks in the rural areas during last one year;

(c) whether it is also fact that inspite of representation being received for opening of branches of the banks in rural areas and remote hilly areas, the branches of the banks have not been opened as yet; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. 1014 branches of Public Sector Banks and 353 branches of Private Sector Banks were opened during the period from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007, respectively. During this period, 69 rural branches were opened by the Public Sector Banks.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi